

### ABSTRACT

Viscoelastic surfactant based aqueous fluid systems  
5 useful as thickening agents in various applications, e.g.  
to suspend particles produced during the excavation of  
geologic formations. The surfactants are  
zwitterionic/amphoteric surfactants such as dihydroxyl  
alkyl glycinate, alkyl amphoteric acetate or propionate, alkyl  
10 betaine, alkyl amidopropyl betaine and alkylimino mono-  
or di-propionates derived from certain waxes, fats and  
oils. The thickening agent is used in conjunction with an  
inorganic water-soluble salt or organic additive such as  
phthalic acid, salicylic acid or their salts.

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